

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THROUGH ONE ADMINISTRATION.

By FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT, 12mo, pp. 564. James R. Osgood & Co.

The Washington novel, or one dealing with political life, is always looked for with interest by the public. *The National Capital* is a central point of all Americans. They read eagerly every detail of the public and private lives of noted men connected with the Government which the newspapers can furnish them—how they dream and how they talk, what they say and what they do not say, their wives and children, their struggles for an education and the decorations in their parlors. Nothing comes amiss to a greedy public. The Washington novel is more fascinating than the Washington letter. The reader looks to it for fresh sketches of the Nation's great man than the correspondent finds it always prudent to make; and hints little details of characteristics and character through its pages in the hope of finally catching the original of the portrait. The Washington novel seems to be read abroad also, especially in England, with great interest. The question of the morality or immorality of American politics and public life—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, of the precise degree of its immorality—is an absorbing one. When the author, as in "Democracy," draws a dark picture, in which there is no gleam of light, crowds the foreground with corruption, and puts purity and honor and noble morality far in the background, if they appear on his canvas at all, exaggerates all the vices and ignores most of the refinements and graces of Washington life, the heart of the British reviewer is filled with a fierce joy. He may not know any more of the real America than the writer in *Blackwood*, who expressed his surprise that Saund Gaylard, in Mr. Howells's *Modern Instance*, should combine the functions of an attorney and a barrister; but he has constructed out of his inner consciousness an America in which all Senators take bribes, and the political atmosphere reeks with corruption, and he welcomes the satirist who seems to confirm his handwork. It may be said at once that he will not find full support for his theory in Mrs. Burnett's book. Whatever else may be said of her sketch of life at the capital, it is certainly not libelous. While a corrupt intrigue forms the basis of the political side of the story, the predominance of good is recognized as well as the existence of evil, and her leading Senator—this must have been a shock to the British reviewer—actually refuses a bribe.

Mrs. Burnett has attained popularity as a novelist, and is herself a resident of Washington. Naturally a book was expected from her which would differ from most of its predecessors in the same field, in being written with knowledge of the theme and giving fresh views of it. In this respect we think it will be found disappointing. There are two distinct sides to the book, and the Washington side is wholly subordinate in interest to the other. Its characters are mostly shadowy. Some of them have not names even, but pass across the stage under their official titles. The very name of the book is somewhat misleading. The events described are prolonged "through one Administration," but they have nothing to do with the Administration, but rather to do with the Senator—*"qui croit à la Providence et l'efficacité de la prière doit se rappeler qu'il accepte tous les principes et leurs révoltes contre la déication antique."* The essays on Virgil and on Marcus Aurelius Antoninus are both good and appreciative, the latter especially so. The "modern" volume comprises essays on Mazzini, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Ernest Renan, George Eliot, etc. Of those the essays on Hugo, Réman, and Eliot are the best. Mr. Myers does not believe in "politics" puts another man in his place, and there is the inevitable "bill" to be lobbed through—the latter episode for the first time bringing a distinctive phase of Washington life, if we may believe it to be such, to the story. Here and there is a passage or two, a satirical description or good-humored satire. But these are brought in with an effort, and the story promptly returns to its real current—the unfortunate love of a married woman for a man who is not her husband. The man is Colonel Tredeennis, whom Mrs. Amory had met in Washington eight years before, when she was Bertha Herrick. The word that might have brought them together was not spoken, and when Tredeennis returns to Washington from the plains and the Indians, he finds her a wife and mother. Tredeennis's love for her is as strong as ever, and, seeing that she is unhappy, he watches with anxiety her friendship for an agreeable young Government clerk, Arbutnot, who seems to be in love with her, and who talks disappointed hopes, and sings tenor in that indifferent and blighted manner which is supposed to be peculiarly dangerous to the peace of women. Bertha's father, Professor Herrick, watches this too, fearing a disaster. Arbutnot himself watches Bertha, and the rest—in fact, all the characters in the book watch one another and discuss one another, to a paternoster extent—and is the first to discover that Tredeennis is the man whom Bertha loves. Mrs. Sylvester, a young widow, a friend of Bertha, discovers it also, and a full confidence between them follows. Amory, the husband, a graceful, fascinating, sellish and shallow man, is about the only one who does not discover that his wife is wretched, and in love with another man. He is too much absorbed in himself and the Western land scheme. This is a project to make certain lands valuable by putting a railroad bill through Congress—an idea which has been worn threadbare by the novelists and dramatists. He persuades his wife to use her social influences, her dinner parties and receptions, to help the bill, telling her that its success will bring him legal business. She is portrayed as doing so with strange innocence and ignorance. Scandal connects her name with that of Senators whom she has entertained for her husband's sake. He attempts bribery in a way that would probably make a professional lobbyist open his eyes—gives her an envelope containing a check to hand to Senator Blundell, who has never given any indication how he stands toward the bill. This also gets about, and a part of society prepares to trample her under foot. Her friends rally and protect her. Tredeennis, being always her unseen guardian, her husband becomes a defaulter to her and her father, and Tredeennis goes back to the plains. Time passes, and in perhaps the only really strong and dramatic scene in the book, she overhears at the inauguration ball the news that Tredeennis has been killed by the Indians, while trying to save the life of a little child. Here the curtain falls.

It would be perhaps a severe characterization to say that this is a demoralizing book; but it is not to be denied that its tone is unhealthful, and its effect unwholesome. The single and controlling theme, as it has been already said, is the love of a married woman for a man who is not her husband. In the early part of the book the reader is perhaps misled as to the object of this affection, and looks for a catastrophe in which Arbutnot shall be involved. Then the situation changes, but not the idea. There is still the danger of dishonor, with Tredeennis as the partner in it. It seems almost like an exaggeration to allude to a possibility which the story never approaches. But the possibility is always seen in the distance. Professor Herrick, Bertha's father, sees it and discusses it with Tredeennis; Tredeennis sees it and discusses it with Professor Herrick—both with their eyes upon Arbutnot. Arbutnot sees it, and Mrs. Sylvester sees it. The idea is never absent, and the use of it is certainly not much relieved by the fact that no climax comes, and that the treatment of the situation is not strong or complete or natural. The selection of the theme could be pardoned, if it served a useful purpose. The errors and sins of the passions play too large a part in life to be shut out from fiction. They can be made to show that the bitterness of sin is inexorable and lasting. But Mrs. Burnett's book teaches nothing. She giveth the materials for a catastrophe, and then, apparently for the reason that a catastrophe is not to be thought of, scatters them again, neither working out a moral lesson nor accomplishing an artistic result. Perhaps the best proof of the morbid tone of the book is that not one of its leading characters is living an actual and healthy life. Tredeennis, certainly one of the most estimable and tiresome persons that ever played hero in a book, is in love with another man's wife, and she is in love with him. Arbutnot has been embittered and rendered indifferent by a faithless love. Mrs. Sylvester had a cruel husband who made her a sad and hopeless woman. Even the old professor, we are rather amused to learn, married a woman we could not love and loved a woman he could not marry. As the English footman says in the play, "It's

Hagony! Hagony!" The one touch of natural sentiment is where Arbutnot and Mrs. Sylvester fall in love in the conventional manner of real life, while afternoons unchristened; and tempest and storm and wringing of hands, and gasping, prove really refreshing.

In literary style the book appears to be an invasion of the field which Howells and James have made their own—that of the so-called analytical novel. The nice mixed ethics of Miss Hannah More, a "desperate flirter," she weekend of the year of a dozen admires, who worshipped her charms; And yet she was angry her husband should find with grand Lady A. a letter for his mind. All jaded and torn in his brittle life With poverty, brain-wreck, dyspepsia and slight. Her intimate friends, with wonderful art, Betokening like softness of head and heart, Sent back all her letters, to comfort the soul of the mournful old man in his infinite dole.

What is written in confidence, once was thought sealed, As sacred as kisses, and never revealed; But in England, it is all blazoned and told The moment the writer lies under the mould.

"Joy's Friends" is a proverb, but after today The friends of Carlyle shall eclipse them for aye!

She was "sweet martyr," the critics agree, And he a "great brave man never you see"; But to me it sounds like Biddle-de-dee.

Philadelphia, July 11, 1883. HENRY PETERSON.

THE FIRST WOMAN IN CARBONATE.

From *The Pioneer News*.

It would have been interesting to the reader what was the electrifying effect on the men in the camp when word was passed along the line that the Colonels' knot of men were gathered here and there watching, looking in the direction from whence the wagon was to come. As she now in sight, each one gathered around his chief, that he might be able to see her. Curious eyes were watching her every step as she approached the colonel's quarters. But the crowd which had gathered around the officer for mail received respectively scattered, and the colonel, mounted and accompanied by his husband, proceeded toward the county clerk's office. He had been advertised as a man of great energy, and he did not disappoint the crowd. As he went along, the colonel's mount, a grey, was followed by the unbroken line of the outside habitation who woman mounted and accompanied by her husband, proceeded toward the county clerk's office. 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